

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 7, 2016

Dr. Denis Ebodaghe, National Program Leader
Division of Agricultural Systems
National Institute of Food and Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW, STOP 2201
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Dr. Ebodaghe:

We write in support of the application submitted by VitaminSea Seaweed to the National Institute of Food and Agriculture's (NIFA) Small Business Innovation Research Program for a Phase I grant. VitaminSea Seaweed proposes to study the technical and market feasibility of kelp meal as a nutritional supplement for bread and other foods.

Based in Buxton, Maine, VitaminSea Seaweed has more than 25 years of experience in the field of seaweed harvesting and aquaculture along the coast of Maine. The company harvests, processes, and packages all of its own seaweed-based products including nutritional supplements, pet food, plant fertilizers, and skin care products.

VitaminSea Seaweed plans to expand on its success in seaweed harvesting by exploring the market potential of kelp as a nutritional supplement. Due to research showing the nutritional properties and long shelf life of kelp, the company seeks to create and commercialize a program to introduce kelp meal as a dietary supplement and possible preservative in certain low-moisture foods. If funded, VitaminSea Seaweed would evaluate the potential for using kelp, which could ultimately have economic benefits for local aquaculture enterprises and the rural Maine communities that host these operations.

Thank you for your time and efforts on behalf of VitaminSea Seaweed. We urge NIFA's careful consideration of this application, subject to all applicable laws and regulations, and ask that you please notify Katie Seelen (Collins) at (202) 224-2523 and Adam Lachman (King) at (202) 224-5344 when a final decision has been made.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator